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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING PAPERH
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Your Meeting with Guatemalan Chief of State Oscar Mejia Victores
and Vice Head of State Hector Rodolfo Lobos

SETTING

You will be meeting with Chief of State Mejia and Brigadier General Rodolfo Lobos, Vice Head of State and Chief of the National Defense Staff. Lobos is the leading contender for Minister of Defense by virtue of his current positions and senior rank in the military hierarchy but does not appear to have the full support of the institution. Many junior and middle-grade officers believe [] that his selection as MOD would signal a perpetuation of past mistakes. President-elect Vinicio Cerezo favors Hector Gramajo for the post, but has told General Mejia that he will accept the military's candidate. Lobos' eligibility for the MOD is questionable under the existing Organic Military Law, and an internal battle is raging in the military on whether to amend the Law to allow for Lobos' eligibility. General Mejia plans to retire following the inauguration.

I. MEETING OBJECTIVES

- o To state strong USG support for institutionalization of the democratic process in Guatemala and for the Cerezo administration.
- o To indicate willingness to help the Guatemalan military modernize as long as civilian rule is respected and there is continuing progress in human rights.

II. SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY

- o The Guatemalan military lived up to its pledge of impartiality in the just-concluded elections. There is no evidence it intends to prevent Cerezo from assuming office January 14.
- o But Cerezo is inexperienced and may be under pressure from party hardliners to pursue policies that bring him into conflict with the military.
- o A coup or insubordination would be disastrous for our efforts to establish closer relations with the Guatemalan military.

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o POINTS TO MAKE

- Your institution is to be commended for living up to its pledge of electoral impartiality. This will help us in getting Congressional support for more military assistance.
- We plan to support your new government fully and will work through it to improve bilateral relations.
- We will use appropriate occasions to encourage the new government to work constructively with your institution for the benefit of Guatemala.
- You have indicated in the past that your institution intends to support fully the new civilian government. We applaud that commitment.
- A cooperative relationship with the new civilian authorities will bear fruit in our attempts to get the assistance you and the President need in the military area.
- Once you and the President have decided on your needs, we will attempt to remove existing Congressional restrictions on the kind and amount of military assistance we can provide.
- We are willing now to [redacted] and provide other support permitted by our laws to your counterinsurgency efforts.
- Our preliminary plans are to ask Congress for MAP grant aid for FY87 and for additional FMS credits and IMET training funds as well.
- What are your estimates of the insurgents plans for the coming year and their ability to destabilize the country?

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